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Title: Request the Government to accept the demands of farmers and agricultural labourers of Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (ULUBERIA): Sir, thousands of farmers and agricultural labourers from your State of Andhra Pradesh have come to Delhi and are sitting in Dharna at Jantar Mantar. Their delegation will meet the hon. Speaker in the evening. The hon. Speaker has kindly agreed to meet them in the evening. Nine organisations of agricultural labourers and kisans of Andhra Pradesh have come. They are leading this demonstration in the city of Delhi.

Sir, as you know, last year out of 1107 Mandals, 872 Mandals were declared drought affected. The situation is worse this year and because of that 350 peasants and farmers committed suicide. All of us have discussed this issue. These people have come here. But the Government is not taking necessary steps. Their demands are: (i) About Rs.500 crore should be released from the Calamity Relief Fund to save the situation; (ii) Waiving off institutional crop loans for small and marginal farmers; (iii) Regulate and implement strictly private money lending and punish the culprit; (iv) Enact and implement a Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme; (v) Amend appropriately the Act relating to control of adulteration of seeds, pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers; (vi) Declare remunerative prices for all agricultural crops; (vii) Constitute Central Board for cotton and chilli like Tobacco Board; (viii) Clear all the pending irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh; and (ix) Enhance subsidy amount for agricultural inputs.

They have come here to raise these nine demands. They will meet the hon. Speaker today. I urge upon the Government to accept these demands and save the people, farmers and agricultural labourers of Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI P. UPENDRA (VIJAYAWADA): Sir, I also want to speak on this subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have already given notices in advance. I will call your name later on.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rati Lal Varma, I will call you later as he wants to speak on the same subject.

">SHRI P. UPENDRA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I fully associate myself with the request made by Shri Hannan Mollah and we are grateful to him for raising this issue. A large number of farmers have come from Andhra Pradesh to ventilate their grievances. These incidents have brought into focus the plight of the farmers all over the country.

One specific point which I would like to raise is that on 27th May, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture announced some waiver of the interest on the loans taken from the institutional finance. But it is not very clear whether this applies to the families of all those affected in the or only to the four States which the Central Government and the State Governments have identified. I would also like to mention that only 142 of the 325 families affected by the suicides have so far been given relief by the State Governments. I would request the Central Government to bring this to the notice of the State Governments and also see that relief is given to all of them.

I also fully support the nine demands which are raised by the people who have assembled here. I would request the Government to take immediate action on them.

">SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thousands of farmers from Andhra Pradesh have reached Delhi all the way to draw the attention of the House and the nation to the sad predicament in which the cotton farmers are finding themselves. Sir, as you are aware, the farmers of Andhra Pradesh have been known throughout the country for all these decades as Anna Daata of India and that farmer has been driven to commit suicide.

I understand that nearly 200 cotton farmers have committed suicide, and there are many reasons for it. One, of course, is because of the pressure of private money-lenders. There is a need to act against the private money-lenders in the matter. The farmers also suffered because of bogus seeds and pesticides that the system provided. The institutional finance that was made available to farmers is far from adequate because of which they have taken recourse to this. The Andhra Pradesh Government had announced an ex gratia payment for those families which suffered from the suicide of farmers.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yesterday, we have discussed the same subject in a very elaborate manner.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I am of the view that the Government of India also must grant an ex gratia payment to these affected families, and they must also see that cotton growers of the next year are taken care of through guaranteed price for the cotton. Otherwise, India will suffer from shortage of cotton; nobody will grow cotton either in Andhra or elsewhere.